

## Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06BOGOTA1970, BLUE LANTERN HELICOPTERS: CASE TWO HUGHES

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06BOGOTA1970**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06BOGOTA1970</a>	<a href="#">2006-03-06 14:49</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Bogota</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.elespectador.com/wikileaks>

VZCZCXYZ0001  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #1970/01 0651449  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 061449Z MAR 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2792  
INFO RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEANHA/FAA WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001970

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DDTC: TIM WATKINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2016  
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [KOMC](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN HELICOPTERS: CASE TWO HUGHES  
HELICOPTERS CONTINUED

REF: A. SECSTATE 22779

Classified By: AMB:WBWOOD for Reasons 1.4 (b)+(e)

11. (C) (SUMMARY): Post has confirmed the location of the missing Hughes 500 helicopters that were being used to move cash and valuables on the north coast of Colombia. The helicopters in question were originally sold to the Israeli government by the USG for military purposes but were converted to civilian grade aircraft in 1998. The helicopters came to Colombia on false export and airworthiness documents issued in Israel. Post learned that the helicopters were found in a warehouse owned by Enilse Lopez, A.K.A. "La Gata" ("the cat"), a suspected money-launderer with alleged ties to the paramilitaries. Post has obtained permission to visit the site where the helicopters are being stored in Barranquilla and plans to visit shortly.

-----  
HISTORY  
-----

2.(C) The following is a time-line of how the helicopters came to be in the possession of the Fiscalia in Barranquilla:

-- Two Hughes 500 military grade helicopters were sold to the Israeli government in 1982 for use as ambulance helicopters.

-- In 1998 the two helicopters were grounded by the Israeli military for conversion to civilian aircraft and placed on the market for sale.

-- In 2002 the Israeli government sold the helicopters to CANWEST of Canada. CANWEST did not move the helicopters out of Israel.

-- In 2003, CANWEST sold the helicopters to SAI (Servicios Aeronauticos Integrales) of Mexico. SAI converted the helicopters to civilian grade helicopters and moved the helicopters from Israel to Miami on export certifications and destination documents indicating plans to use the helicopters in Mexico. The export and airworthiness documents were issued in Israel under the numbers 2003-36 and 2003-37.

-- While the helicopters were still in Miami, SAI sold the helicopters to Panama-based company, Trade Leasing and Consulting (TLC). The general manager of TLC is a Colombian national by the name of Francisco Alberto Restrepo Flores. He moved the helicopters to Cartagena at the end of January 12004.

-- Aviones Ejecutivos, otherwise known as AVIEL LTDA, based in Medellin, Colombia, carried out the import processing for TLC. Colombian Civil Aviation authorized AVIEL a 90-day temporary certificate of airworthiness on the condition that AVIEL obtain an H3WE from the USG. During these 90 days, the helicopters were used by Aviel to move valuables (mainly cash) on behalf of Banco Agrario on the north coast of Colombia.

-- The USG-FAA did not issue Aviel the flight authorization (H3WE) because the request stipulated a permission type 396E which did not correspond with the type of helicopter listed in the request, the Hughes 500.

-- Due to the USG's refusal to issue a flight authorization (H3WE), Colombian Civil Aviation reviewed the documentation and determined that the export and airworthiness documents number 2003-36 and 2003-37 exhibited unauthorized modifications. According to the Fiscalia these documents originally indicated use in Mexico, and were later changed to read Colombia. The Fiscalia added that according to Israeli export authorities, these documents were never issued by the Israeli government.

-- These irregularities led Civil Aviation of Colombia in

coordination with the Fiscalia to refuse to issue a permanent airworthiness certificate, thus grounding both helicopters.

-- In September of 2004, the Fiscalia located the helicopters in a warehouse owned by Uniapuesta, a company owned by Enilse Lopez. The Fiscalia took possession of the two helicopters and moved them to their current storage location in Barranquilla.

-----  
ANSWERS TO REMAINING QUESTIONS  
-----

¶3. The following are the remaining answers to questions from DDTC:

¶Q. Prior to being brought to the court's attention, what is the history of the helicopters and for what purpose were they used?

¶A. The helicopters were first used as Israeli military-ambulance helicopters and then in 1998 were grounded. In early 1999 the helicopters were reconfigured for civilian use by either CANWEST or SAI. The helicopters remained grounded until January 2004, when AVIEL began using the helicopters to transport money and other items of value on behalf of BancoAgrario in the north coast area.

¶Q. Can the U.S. Embassy visit the site where the helicopters are being stored?

¶A. The helicopters are currently being stored at the Parquadero Chemical in Barranquilla under the supervision/authority of the DireccionSeccional de la Fiscalia. The exact address is Calle 3, Via AEternit No. 66-164. The phone number of the Fiscalia in Barranquilla is 075-351-0429 (calling from Bogota) and the contact names available for Barranquilla are Judith Valluelo Montes and Perla Davila Martinez. The address of the Direccion Seccional de la Fiscalia is Cra 44 37-28, 2nd floor. Post does have verbal authorization from both Hector Cruz and Perla Davila to visit the site and is making arrangements to do so. The purpose of the visit would be to personally verify tail numbers and identiplates on both helicopters.

-----  
NEXT STEPS  
-----

¶4. Post intends to visit the site where the helicopters are being stored and verify the tail numbers of said helicopters. Post also intends to provide assistance to the Fiscalia in Bogota to obtain answers to critical questions regarding the documentation accompanying the helicopters in an effort to expedite the adjudication of this case.

WOOD

=====CABLE ENDS=====